

AFHRA Research Division

Organizational History Branch



Lineage and Honors History of the 15 Airlift Wing (PACAF)

Lineage

Established as 15 Pursuit Group (Fighter) on 22 Nov 1940. Activated on 1 Dec 1940. Redesignated: 15 Pursuit Group (Interceptor) on 12 Feb 1942; 15 Fighter Group on 15 May 1942. Inactivated on 15 Oct 1946. Redesignated 15 Fighter Group (Air Defense) on 20 Jun 1955. Activated on 18 Aug 1955. Discontinued on 1 Jul 1960. Consolidated (31 Jan 1984) with the 15 Tactical Fighter Wing, which was established, and activated, on 17 Apr 1962. Organized on 1 Jul 1962. Inactivated on 1 Oct 1970. Redesignated 15 Air Base Wing on 20 Oct 1971. Activated on 1 Nov 1971. Redesignated 15 Airlift Wing on 28 Apr 2003.

Assignments

14 Pursuit Wing, 1 Dec 1940; 7 Interceptor (later, VII Fighter) Command, 23 Jan 1942; United States Army Strategic Air Forces, 16 Jul 1945; VII Fighter Command, 5 Aug 1945; Pacific Air Command, US Army, 25 Nov 1945 (attached to 7 Fighter Wing, 25 Nov-31 Dec 1945); 7 Fighter Wing, 1 Jan 1946; Seventh Air Force, 1 Mar-15 Oct 1946. 4707 Air Defense Wing, 18 Aug 1955; 4708 Air Defense Wing, 1 Mar 1956; 30 Air Division, 8 Jul 1956; Syracuse Air Defense Sector, 1 Sep 1958-1 Jul 1960. Tactical Air Command, 17 Apr 1962; 836th Air Division, 1 Jul 1962-1 Oct 1970. Pacific Air Forces, 1 Nov 1971-.

Components

Group: **15** Operations: 13 Apr 1992-. *Squadrons:* **6** Night Fighter: attached 6-25 Mar 1943, assigned 26 Mar 1943-5 Jun 1944; attached 1-30 Sep 1944. **9** Airborne Command and Control: 1 Nov 1971-31 Mar 1992. **12** Fighter: 23 Aug-1 Dec 1942. **13** Bombardment Squadron, Tactical: 8 Feb 1969-1 Oct 1970 (detached 15 Sep-1 Oct 1970). **22** Tactical Air Support: 1 Nov 1971-4 Apr 1980. **43** Tactical Fighter: 8 Jan 1964-15 Jul 1970 (detached 17 Aug 1965-c. 4 Jan 1966). **45** Pursuit (later, 45 Fighter; 45 Tactical Fighter): 1 Dec 1940-15 Oct 1946; 1 Jul 1962-1 Oct 1970 (detached 4 Apr-10 Aug 1965). **46** Pursuit (later, 46 Fighter; 46 Tactical Fighter): 1 Dec 1940-24 Apr 1944; 1 Jul 1962-1 Oct 1970 (detached 11 May-22 Aug 1965 and 1-10 Nov 1965). **47** Pursuit (later, 47 Fighter; 47 Fighter-Interceptor; 47 Tactical Fighter): 1 Dec 1940-15 Oct 1946; 18 Aug 1955-1 Jul 1960; 1 Jul 1962-1 Oct 1970 (detached 22 Jul-27 Nov 1965). **65** Airlift: 10 Mar-13 Apr 1992. **78** Fighter: attached 6-17 Mar 1943; assigned 26 Mar 1943-15 Oct 1946 (detached 26 Mar-10 Apr 1943). **421** Tactical Fighter: 25 Apr-1 Jul 1967. **4424** Combat Crew Training: 15 Oct 1968-1 Oct 1970. *Flight:* **34** Crash-Rescue Boat: 18 Aug 1955-8 Jun 1956.

Stations

Wheeler Field, Territory of Hawaii, 1 Dec 1940; Bellows Field, Territory of Hawaii, 3 Jun 1944-5 Feb 1945; South Field, Iwo Jima, 6 Mar 1945; Bellows Field, Territory of Hawaii, 25 Nov 1945; Wheeler Field, Territory of Hawaii, 9 Feb-15 Oct 1946. Niagara Falls Municipal Airport, NY, 18 Aug 1955-1 Jul 1960. MacDill AFB, FL, 1 Jul 1962-1 Oct 1970. Hickam AFB, HI, 1 Nov 1971-.

Commanders

Maj Clyde K. Rich, 1 Dec 1940; Maj Lorry N. Tindal, 6 Dec 1940; Maj Clarence F. Hegy, 17 Mar 1941; Maj Lorry N. Tindal, 25 Apr 1941; Lt Col Paul W. Blanchard, 20 Sep 1941; Lt Col William S. Steele, 12 Feb 1942; Lt Col Sherwood E. Buckland, 5 Mar 1943; Lt Col Kenneth R. Powell, 17 Jun 1943 (temporary); Lt Col Sherwood E. Buckland, 7 Jul 1943; Lt Col William A. Bowen, 23 Aug 1943 (temporary); Lt Col Sherwood E. Buckland, 15 Sep 1943; Col James O. Beckwith Jr., 27 Sep 1943; Lt Col Dewitt S. Spain, 16 Apr 1945; Lt Col Julian E. Thomas, 17 May 1945; Lt Col Elmer E. Booth, 19 Jul 1945 (temporary); Col John W. Mitchell, 21 Jul 1945; Col William Eades, by Nov 1945; Col Oswald W. Lunde, 25 Nov 1945-15 Oct 1946. Col Stanley E. Matthews, 1955; Col Wayne B. Curren, c. 1956; Col Thomas L. Wiper, c. 1957; Col Vic L. Byers Jr., 23 Mar 1959-1 Jul 1960. None (not manned), 17 Apr-30 Jun 1962; Col George L. Jones, 1 Jul 1962; Col Francis J. Vetort, 8 Jun 1964; Col Levi R. Chase, 6 Jul 1964; Col Raymond A. Bradley, 4 Oct 1965; Col Woodrow W. Ramsey, 6 Oct 1965; Col Donald N. Stanfield, 12 Jun 1966; Col Charles J. Bowers, 29 Jul 1966; Col James D. Catington, 15 Aug 1966; Col Roy D. Carlson, 21 Jun 1967; Col Clifford H. Meier, 20 May 1968; Col Travis R. McNeil, 1 Feb-1 Oct 1970. Col Ernest W. Pate, 1 Nov 1971; Col Howard R. Inks, 3 Jun 1972; Col Wilmot E. Y. Paxton, 23 Aug 1972; Col Richard L. Thompson, 1 May 1976; Col Howard F. O'Neal, 17 May 1976; Col Sharman R. Stevenson, 7 Jul 1978; Col John A. Parrish Jr., 15 Aug

1980; Col Charles F. Luigs, 21 Jul 1983; Col Keith B. Connolly, 18 Apr 1984; Col Wayne E. Clark, 19 Apr 1985; Col Timothy D. Gill, 22 May 1987; Col William J. Kennedy, 9 Nov 1987; Col Don A. Lyon, 20 Sep 1988; Col William C. Van Meter, 23 Jul 1991; Brig Gen Dwight M. Kealoha, 25 Jun 1993; Col Bruce A. Brown, 26 Jan 1996; Col Ann M. Testa, 14 Aug 1997; Brig Gen Steven J Redmann, 8 Jul 1999; Col Albert F. Riggles, 14 Jun 2001; Col Raymond G. Torres, 28 Apr 03-.

Aircraft

A-12, 1940-1942; OA-9, 1940-1942; P-26, 1940-1942; P-36, 1940-1942; B-12, 1941-1942; P-39, 1941-1944; P-40, 1941-1944; P-47, 1943-1945, 1945-1946, 1946; P-70, 1943-1944; A-24, 1944; P-51, 1944-1946; P-61, 1944; A-26, 1946. F-86, 1955-1958; F-102, 1958-1960. F-84, 1962-1964; T-33, 1962-1970; F-4, 1964-1970; B-57, 1968-1970. EC-135, 1971-1992; O-2, 1972-1980; T-33, 1972-1987; C-135, 1992-2003; C-37, 2002-; C-40, 2003-.

Operations

Served as part of the defense force for Hawaiian Islands, using A-12, OA-9, B-12, P-36, P-39, and P-40 aircraft. Suffered numerous casualties and lost aircraft during Japanese attack on Hawaii, 7 Dec 1941, but was remanned and reorganized, and remained part of the Hawaiian defense system until 1944. Sent squadrons to the Central and South Pacific at various times for operations against the Japanese. Reequipped with P-51 aircraft in 1944 and trained for very-long range escort missions. Moved to Iwo Jima in Feb 1945, and in Mar, supported the invasion force, and began bombing Bonin Islands. In Apr and May 1945, escorted B-29 raids into Japan and struck airfields to curtail enemy attacks on invasion force at Okinawa. Continued fighter sweeps and long-range escort missions to Japan until end of war. In Nov 1945, transferred back to Hawaii without personnel and equipment. Remanned and reequipped but inactivated less than a year later, on 15 Oct 1946. Activated on 18 Aug 1955 at Niagara Falls Municipal Airport, NY, and equipped with F-86 and later, F-102 aircraft. Performed air defense operations for the Syracuse Air Defense Sector until Jul 1960, when it was discontinued. The 15th Tactical Fighter Wing activated on 17 Apr 1962 at MacDill AFB, FL. Conducted tactical fighter combat crew training, 1962-1963. Reorganized as a mission-capable unit at the time of the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, returning afterwards to a training mission. Deployed the 43d, 45th, 46th, and 47th Squadrons to Southeast Asia in 1965. Functioned as a replacement training unit for F-4 aircrews, 1965-1970. Also began B-57 light-bomber aircrew training in 1968. Deployed 16 F-4s at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC, during the Pueblo crisis in 1968. Inactivated in 1970. Activated as an Air Base Wing on 1 Nov 1971 at Hickam AFB, HI, with control over Hickam, Wheeler, Dillingham, and Johnston Island AF Bases, Bellows AFS, and several smaller subsidiary bases. Commanded, maintained, operated, and provided security for all AF installations in the Hawaiian Islands, Wake Island, and other island groups in Central and South Pacific Ocean. Wing's EC-135Es provided airborne command and control support for the Commander-in-Chief Pacific, Nov 1971-Mar 1992. Sheltered over 93,000 orphans, refugees, and evacuees from Southeast Asia during Operations Babylift and New Life, 6 Apr-30 Sep 1975. From May 1977 to Apr 1980, participated in Project Lagoon, a joint service operation to remove

radioactive waste from Enewetak Atoll. From 1983, supported the space shuttle program by maintaining Hickam as a designated emergency landing site. Beginning in 1992, assigned C-135 executive aircraft, provided special air transport for Commander, US Pacific Command; Commander, Pacific Air Forces; Commander, US Army Pacific; and for the Commander, Hawaiian Air National Guard. Deployed support personnel and equipment to Southwest Asia to assist in the liberation of Kuwait, Aug 1990-Mar 1991. Continued to deploy personnel worldwide in support of contingency and relief efforts, and supported deployments to the Pacific as it hosted deploying units in stopovers enroute to Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia locations.

Service Streamers

None

Campaign Streamers

World War II: Central Pacific; Air Offensive, Japan.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers

None

Decorations

Distinguished Unit Citation: Japan, 7 Apr 1945. Air Force Outstanding Unit Awards: 1 Jan 1965-1 Jun 1966; 1 Jan-31 Dec 1969; 4 Apr-3 Sep 1975; 25 Feb-25 Mar 1986; 1 Jul 1989-30 Jun 1991; 1 Jul 1991-30 Jun 1993; 1 Oct 1993-30 Sep 1995; 1 Oct 1995-1 Aug 1997; 2 Aug 1997-1 Aug 1999; 29 Nov 1999-30 Nov 2001.

Lineage, Assignments, Components, Stations, and Honors through 28 Oct 2003

Commanders, Aircraft, and Operations through 3 Dec 2003.

Supersedes published information in Judy G. Endicott (ed.), *Active Air Force Wings as of 1 October 1995* (Washington: USGPO, 1999). **Updated by 15 AW/HO** to include most recent Commanders (December 2003).

Emblem. Approved on 5 Oct 1942.

Prepared by Carl E. Bailey

Approved by Judy G. Endicott